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MORAL *and* CHRISTIAN BENEVOLENCE.

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S E R M O N,

Containing some
R E F L E C T I O N S
U P O N

Mr. *Balguy's* ESSAY ON MORAL GOODNESS;

PREACH'D before the
U N I V E R S I T Y of *Oxford*,
On J U L Y the 25th, 1734.

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L O N D O N :

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91.



St. *John's* Gospel, Chap. XIII. Ver. 34.

A new Commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

ST. *John*, writing to the *elect Lady*, styles this *no new Commandment*, referring to this Passage, where it was before given by our *Saviour*. He repeats this *Command* many times in his three short *Epistles*, almost expressly; and inculcates it through them all in the most moving, and pathetick Terms. These Circumstances add a Weight and Solemnity to the *Precept*: It is there repeated *frequently*, because 'tis to be practis'd *carefully*: and 'tis inculcated *feelingly*, because 'tis a *Precept of Self-denial*, and oftentimes goes against *Flesh and Blood*. For we must part with the unchristian *Love of Self*, before we can to an *Evangelical Degree* love the *Brotherhood*.

One Means no doubt to promote the Practice of it, is to endeavour rightly to understand it, and to form distinct Notions about it.

May I contribute to it by treating the following Particulars from the *Words*, which will be illustrated by some Reflections on the *prior Obligation* Men had to

love one another, in Distinction from which the Text is styl'd a *New Commandment*.

The Order, in which I propose to treat this Subject, is,

1st, To illustrate the Doctrine of *Moral Benevolence*, allowing its Foundation in *Reason*, and to clear it from the Mists thrown about it by some *late Writers*.

2^{dly}, And this, in order to my second Particular, under which I propose a more precise Consideration of *Christian, Brotherly Love*.

3^{dly}, I shall conclude with some Reflections by way of Inference.

1st, I am to illustrate, &c. That *Moral Benevolence* is founded in the *Reason* and *Fitness* of Things is not to be disputed. Nay further, the *Precept* of *loving one another*, was from the Beginning impress'd upon our very *Natures*, written on our Hearts by the Finger of *God*, and after express'd and branch'd out over the second *Table*. But here I would clear the Doctrine from *Misrepresentations*, and make it the Subject of my Enquiry, whether those Aids to it, *innate Benevolence*, and *natural Affections*, which afford one good Argument for the Practice of it, detract from the *Virtue* of the *Moral Agent*: and whether those Actions, which are attributed to *natural Affections*, which they call *instinctive Qualities*, and *blind Impulses*, are in Man purely *irrational*, and not of *Moral Consideration*.

For, amongst the *Modern Moralists*, † one refers us for the Foundation of Moral Goodness to a kind

† Dr. Hutcheson.

Disposition, a *benevolent Affection*, towards our Fellow-Creatures. † Another excludes *natural Benevolence* in such a measure from having any Share in it, as to detract from the Merit of the *Agent*. According to this Scheme, 'tis a Character of a Man of a moderate Share of good Deeds to say, he is *ill-natur'd*. For, by how much the more good his *Disposition* is, so much the less is the Moment of his *Virtue*. Hence, according to this Scheme it follows, that *paternal Affection*, *filial Tenderneſs*, *fraternal Love*, diminish that *Virtue*, which is exercis'd towards the *Objects* of them. These, 'tis urg'd, are *instinctive Motions*, which rather incline and bias the *Will*, than determine the *Judgment*; whereas the *Virtues*, which we exercise to others, are from the *Choice* of the *practical Judgment*, and an *acquir'd*, and *rational Benevolence*.

Now tho' it must be allow'd, that an *evil Disposition* may be an *Unhappiness*, yet it is by no means an *Excuse* for *Vice*; and, if the *malevolent Disposition* will not excuse *Vice*, suppose Acts of Barbarity and Cruelty, how doth it appear, that *natural Benevolence* should lessen the *Virtue* of Acts of *Kindness* and *Goodness*? Why 'tis urg'd, because where there is less *good Nature*, there *Reason* has more to do in the good Act. But sure it doth not follow, that because a Man is naturally *kind* and *good*, that therefore he should not have *Reason* in an equal Degree with the *malevolent Man*. And where Persons of each of these *Characters* perform the same

† Mr. Balguy.

Act of Goodness and Virtue in Proportion to their Abilities, it is no doubt as *much Virtue* in one, as the other. For we must not here attend to the *Nature* of the *Agents*, but the *Circumstances* of the *Case*, which Prudence is to determine to a certain Degree and Measure in one, as well as the other. The *naturally benevolent* is confin'd to fix'd Bounds in his Actions, and so is the *untowardly Disposition*; and, if either of them stop short, or go beyond them, they are both alike wrong. Had the *good Samaritan* been an *ill-natur'd Person*, it doth not appear, that his Action would have been e'er a whit the more *virtuous*; since he took all the Care, that was requisite of the distress'd Object, he did just what was fit to be done, and what the *Reason* of the Thing requir'd. And just so much should the *Levite* have done, who pass'd by on the other Side: Nor would his *Want* of *Bowels* render his *Want* of *Charity* less worthy of Blame and Censure. In short, the Laws of *Virtue* and *Reason* are to be observed by all, whether naturally *benevolent*, or not. For they are not to be temper'd by the soft, or hard Disposition of Men, but are rigid and inflexible. Indeed a Conformity to them will be rendered more easy and facile to a Person of a soft and sweet Complexion, but then *he* can only live up to the Rules of *right Reason*; and what doth the *Lord* of *Nature* require of him more? And what less of the *Person* of the *contrary Disposition*? If the Ease and Facility, with which an Act is perform'd, were to detract from the *Moment* of the *Virtue*, the single, good Act of the wicked Man would be
more

more *virtuous* in him, than the same Act of the good Man ; because the good Man's Habits would remove the usual Difficulty, attending the Practice of solitary Acts. Should a *Coward*, sent upon an Enterprize by his Prince, perform Actions, which might equal those of the *habitually brave*, and *valourous Soldier*, would the Exploits of the latter, who had answer'd his Master's Dependence upon him, be therefore depreciated and diminished by him? I presume not. Or should an *ill affected Subject* perform those Engagements to his *Sovereign*, and punctually observe the Laws, and maintain his Allegiance out of a Principle of Honour, and a due Sense of his Obligations ; would he be more amiable in his Eyes than the *well-affected Subject*, who obeys him out of *Love* and *Affection*, join'd with the former Principle? Sure he would not.

It might as well be affirm'd in *Religion*, that the Man, who employs his Talents to their proper Use and Degree, should be *less pious* for having a greater Measure of *God's Gifts* and *Graces* ; as that the *Moral Man* should be *less virtuous* upon account of his *good Nature* and *tender Affections*.

And, if the Estimation of *Virtue* was to be so taken, we should be tried at the last Day, not according to the Degrees of the *Goodness* of our *Lives*, but according to our *Make* and *Constitution*: And those, who have the greatest Share of *innate Benevolence*, would not be in a Capacity of being so happy, as those, who have not : because their *instinctive, good Quality* would lessen their *Virtue*, and detract from its Moment. Tho'

we are told, that every Man shall be judg'd according to the Deeds actually done in his Body, whether they be good, or whether they be evil. Nor will this leave any room for Reflection on God's infinite Justice; who, tho' he may reward equally, equal Virtues; yet he may assist the Weakness of hard Dispositions by *providential* or *supernatural* Graces here, according to their Endeavours.

But still to extricate this Point further, and to make the Way more open to the Doctrine of *Christian Benevolence*, and *Brotherly Love*; we may observe, that the modern *Moralists*, when they make a Comparison in *human Actions*, suppose some of them to flow from *pure Instinct*, and a *blind Impulse*. Now *Instinct* is the Law of *sensitive Beings*, which actuates them, and is not a *Rule*, by which they act, but is a kind of *impulsive Quality*, which they are endow'd with to promote the Ends of *Providence*, to preserve the *Individuals*, and to continue the *Species*. Whatsoever this may do in the *sensitive Part* of *Man*, it cannot have all the Pre-*dominance* in those *Acts*, by which we *communicate Good* to our Fellow-creatures. The *Brute Part* of the Creation have no *Judgment* to deliberate, no *Wills* to execute; and therefore they have a *Law* to impel them. But the *Actions* of *Man*, which do not pertain to his *sensitive Part*, cannot be wholly ascrib'd to such an *Impulse* or *Instinct*; since he must *will* and *chuse* the *Act*, before the *Physical Powers* will follow and obey the *Motions* of the *Will*. And even those *Actions*, which are common both to *Men* and *Brutes*, come under a different Notion in the one, than in the other.

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The *Care of Young* is *instinct* in the *Brute*, but 'tis a Duty, founded in *Reason* in the *Man*; and tho' there may be a *natural Tenderneſs*, and *benevolent Affection*, which may diſpoſe him to this Care, yet his Action may be nevertheleſs *rational* for all that. Was it otherwiſe, a Man could never perform a properly rational Act, but againſt the Grain, and in Oppoſition to his natural Complexion. Whereas the contrary ſeems rather to be true, that even thoſe *kind and tender Acts*, which we are prompted to from a *natural, ſweet Diſpoſition*, tho' we do not ſo maturely weigh them in every Caſe, are not purely of *Instinct*, but may come under a *Moral Conſideration*. It may ſure be allow'd for a *natural Principle*, that, as we are Creatures, full of Infirmities, we were made to *help and aſſiſt* each other. Should therefore a Perſon, whoſe Diſpoſition is ſweetned with an *innate Benevolence* from Emotions of *Pity*, relieve an *Object* apparently miſerable *extempore*, and not weighing the Circumſtances of his Caſe; his Action would be notwithſtanding *good*, and of a *moral Nature*, as it ſquares with the *general Principle* above, tho' he ſhould not deliberate over the Particulars on the Side of the *Object*. So that we can hardly allow *bare Instinct* to be the only Principle, from which ſuch fort of Actions flow. Such *Benevolence* is indeed a kind of *Prejudice* on the Side of *Goodneſs*; but there muſt always be ſomething of *Reason* in its Acts, which would be like thoſe of a *Judge*, who being prepoſſeſs'd in his Opinion of the Right of a *Caſe*, ſhould determine for a Party without weighing minute Particulars. His Action would

go upon the *general Principle* of doing *Right*, tho' it would not be in all Points strictly regular. Relief of Misery in this *Case* would be the *benevolent Man's general Principle*, only he would presume the *Circumstances* of the *Object* of his Goodness.

And indeed whatsoever may be said of *instinctive Qualities*, they seem in Man to be *general*; and *natural Benevolence* seems to be given us without any *Determination* to this, or that *particular Person*; which is a kind, and tender *Disposition* to do Acts of *Mercy* and *Humanity*, exerting it self under the superior Faculties, which turn it more strongly to those, who educate us, and with whom we familiarly converse; and which grows up naturally with the *Sense* of our *Relations*. The *Determination* of our Acts to *Father, Brother, Friend*, are *rational Deductions*; and we honour, revere and cherish the one, and love and do good to the other, upon Motives of *Reason*, because we know and apprehend our selves to be under *Obligations* of many kinds to them. And indeed there is the best Reason to be assign'd, why in *Man Instinct* should be *general*, and in *Brutes particular*. They know not the *End* for which they act, and therefore need a *Law* to carry them to take Care of themselves, and their Young in *particular*, to preserve and continue themselves, and their Species. But Man has *Reason* to regulate his *Benevolence*, which he is to exercise according to the *Variety* of *Circumstances* and *Objects*. So the *Woman* remembers her *sucking Child*, because it wants the most of her Care; and tho' there may be a *tender Impulse*, as a kind of *Remembrancer* within

within her; yet it is not *blind*, but moves by the *Eye* of *Reason*. And if we usually appear more kind, and beneficent towards those of our *own House*, 'tis from the plain and obvious *Reason* of the Thing, which is so strong, that it generally prevails, and not from a *blind*, and *irrational Instinct*. When therefore we do any Act of Kindness to our *Father, Brother, Friend*, there is no *Impulse*, which can detract from the *Virtue*; the *benevolent Instinct* is here rightly determin'd; the Act is strictly and properly *moral*; the *Relative* has a general Title to our good Offices by *Reason*, as the *Stranger* has in *given Circumstances*, and they are by no means in the former Case less *virtuous*. (1) *St. Paul* brands some particular *Hereticks* with this Mark, that they were without *natural Affection*. Now we cannot suppose, that he would have stigmatiz'd them for *that*, which they *could not help*: From whence we may conclude, that it doth not mean a *pure Instinct*, but some *Quality*, which might be *lost*, or *improv'd*; and that it is call'd *natural*, because it is a *Benevolence* towards those, who are *naturally related* to us, the *Seeds* of which may be sow'd by *Nature*, but are nourish'd and perfected by *Reason*. And if it is a *Sin* not to have it, 'tis a strange Position to affirm, that it should detract from *Virtues*, exercis'd towards the *Objects* of it.

Let us then not disdain, or set low those Aids, which *God* and *Nature* have furnish'd us with; let us, as the *old Philosophers* express it, *follow Nature* in the Practice

(1) Rom. Chap. i. ver. 31.

of *Love to all*. This is the *Old Commandment*, as it is laid in *natural Principles*: And these Animadversions open the Way to my second Particular; under which I propos'd a precise Consideration (which arises more directly from the Words) of *Christian, Brotherly Love*, to which we are oblig'd by a *superadded Obligation*.

In order to which, we will first remark the Difference between *Moral* and *Christian Benevolence*: for there is the same Distinction between them, as between other *Moral* and *Christian Virtues*: which is made by the *End* and *Motive* of the Actions. The former may be practis'd by the purely *Moral Man*, the latter only by the *Religious One*. The *Moral Man* doth good to his Fellow-creatures, because *Reason* directs him to it; the *Religious Man*, because not only *Reason* directs, but his *Saviour* commands it. The former takes his *Rule of Benevolence* from *God the Creator and Governour*; the latter both from *Him*, and the *Mediator and Redeemer* of Mankind. The former knows no Difference in the *Objects* of his Benevolence, but what arises from the *common, civil and natural Relations*; the latter acknowledges a *Spiritual and Religious One*, which is the most momentous and important. *Moral Men* may dispute much, and be at a Loss about the Foundation of their *Virtue and Goodness*: But the *Religious Man* needs go no further than the *Gospel*, where he finds the *Love of God*, is the *Basis* of it, and the Actions of his *Saviour* are its *Rule*. 'Tis from this Distinction, that we may best collect the Reason, why our Saviour in the Text styles this Precept a *New Commandment*. Because
what

what was prescrib'd in it, the *utmost Degree of Love*, even to the *Loss of Life* for the *Brethren*, which was practis'd before in few signal Instances of *Friends* and *Patriots*, and those handed down to Posterity, as rare Examples of uncommon Fortitude, Piety and Constancy, was deliver'd to his *Followers*, as a *Christian Duty*. Men did not think this incumbent upon them by the *Laws of Nature and Morality*, which, when most closely observ'd, fix'd the Bounds of the Love of their *Neighbour* in their *own Breast*, made the Love of themselves the Measure of it, prescrib'd, that *we should do unto all Men, as we would they should do unto us*, as a Proof, that *we loved them, as our selves*; so that such Facts were a kind of *Supererogation* in Goodness, and were repaid to them in the Fame and Glory they sought, and adorn'd and celebrated with all the Pomp of Encomiums by admiring Posterity. But the *Christian Hero* is to love his *Brethren better than himself* consider'd in his *temporal Capacity*, and to be ready upon a proper Call to sacrifice his *All* for them.

Again, it was styl'd a *New Command*, not only upon account of the *Matter*, but the *Manner* of it. For *natural Precepts* are *general Rules*, and extend to all: But this is a *positive, particular Injunction of Love*, and is limited both with respect to the *Subject*, to whom it is enjoin'd, and the *Object*, towards which it is to be exercis'd. This is plain from the Context: *By this shall all Men know, that ye are my Disciples; if ye have Love one for another*. Here is evidently a *Limitation* made; and the Love here enjoin'd, is manifestly confin'd to

the *Brotherhood*; since it was to be a *Mark of Distinction*, a sort of *Tessera*, or *Symbol* to distinguish those, who were enlisted under his Banner. And *his Banner over them was Love*. (1) *Grotius* upon the Place intimates thus much; that it was styl'd a *New Commandment*, because it did not refer to the general Love of *all*, or to the Love of *Consanguinity* and *Gratitude*, but to the *special, mutual Love of Christians*, as *such*.

And since there is such an Injunction upon us, 'tis sure an Enquiry of Weight and Importance, tho' easy to be made, in what Particulars it more eminently consists. The Expression in the Text is at large; our Saviour there commands us *to love one another, as he loved us*. We need only go for its Determination to the 3d Chapter of the 1st Epistle of St. *John*, 16th and 17th Verses. *Hereby perceive we the Love of God, because he laid down his Life for us, and we ought to lay down our Lives for the Brethren. But who so hath this World's Good, and seeth his Brother has Need, and shutteth up his Bowels of Compassion from him, how dwelleth the Love of God in him?* This is an Argument *a majori ad minus*, and stands upon this Reason, that if we are to do the *greater*, to part with our *Lives* for the *Brethren*, we must sure do the *lesser*, and be ready to part with our *Goods* for them. So that this Love is a hearty Desire to promote the Welfare of our *Brethren*, especially in their *Spiritual Estate*, which we must evidence, if Occasion

(1) Crit. Sac. Tom. VI. Pag. 1771.

so requires, by a Loss of those Things of *temporal Concernment*, which are most dear and precious to us.

The Practice of the *Primitive Christians* in the *Apostolick* Age, and the noble Army of *Martyrs* in that, and succeeding times, were glorious and illustrious Comments upon the Text. They had no *Property*, but were *rich in good Works*, and as they had *one Heart*, and *one Mouth*, they had but *one Estate*. For we read, that amongst them, *all Things were common*. Nay, even their *Lives* they esteem'd not their own; since they were *bought with a Price*; and they willingly laid them down, when call'd to it, to shew their Obedience to their *Lord's* Command, to bear Testimony to the Faith, to seal the *Gospel* with their Blood, and to confirm and strengthen the *Brethren*.

The Difference then between that *universal Benevolence*, which our *Saviour* sometimes recommends, and the *Brotherly Love*, which is the Matter of this *New Command*, is, that the one disposes us to love one another, as *Men*, the other as *Christians*. This *Spiritual Relation* arises to us from the Union in a *Society*, connected by *different Tyes* than that of *Mankind*: in which the *Fellow-Christians* are *Members*, and *Jesus Christ* the *Head*. Thence it is, that the (1) *Primitive Discipline* restrain'd the *Catechumens*, and those, who were not initiated into the Church by Baptism from the Use of the *Lord's Prayer*, amongst other Reasons, possibly because they could not address to God by the Preface

(1) *Bingham's Origines Eccles.* Book I. Chap. 4. Sect. 7.

of it in the same Sense, as the *πίστοι*, or faithful: who could say *Our Father*, as they were *Children* by *Adoption*; from whence they became *Brethren* by *Grace*. By virtue of the voluntary Engagements, which we enter into, when we commence Members of this Society, we become subject to the *Laws* of its *Governour*, and are bound in Obligations, which we were not by the *Laws* of *Nature*. A Care for every Member, is, by particular Injunctions, incumbent upon all; but if the Member of another Body should suffer, it sure is not entitled to a Care from this, in every respect the same and equal. Is it fit, that the *Sons* of the *Bond-woman* should be *Heirs* with the *Children* of the *Free*? Is it consistent, that those, who are at *Enmity* with *Jesus Christ*, should be nourish'd and cherish'd with the same *Love*, as those, who demand it in *his Name*? Are we bound to distinguish those with the choicest of our Favours here, whom he has declar'd *he* shall be *asham'd* of in his *Kingdom*? This is neither consistent with the Tenour of the *Scripture*, or the *Reason* of the Thing. When therefore (1) *St. Basil*, (2) *St. Austin*, and other *Writers* advance, that all Men are *equally* the Objects of our *Love*; they do not mean, that the Objects are

(I) Διὰ τοῦτο φερσίνκει τὸ μὲν ἀγάπῃ ἴσῃ καὶ ὁμοίᾳ πρὸς πάντων τοῖς πασιν ἐστὶν, τὸ δὲ πμὴν κατὰ τὸ πρέπον ἐκάστῳ γίνεσθαι. St. Basil. p. 465. Concio. 3. Vol. 3.

(2) Omnes autem Homines æquè diligendi, sed cum omnes prodesse non possis, his potissimum consulendum est, qui pro Locorum & Temporum vel quarumlibet Rerum Opportunitatibus constrictius tibi quasi quadam Sorte junguntur. St. Aug. Tom. 3. Lib. 1. Cap. 28.

equally worthy, or that the Love should be *equal* in its *Intenseness*, or *Effects*; but that it should be extended *comprehensively* to all, tho' not in the *same Measure* and *Degree*.

It is beyond all Possibility of Falshood, that our *Saviour* was the most *good* and *benevolent Character*, that ever adorn'd and diffus'd its Influence over the World, or was recorded in the Annals of Time. He was in a proper and peculiar Sense the *Son of God*, who was *Benevolence* and *Goodness* it self; and yet we find, that in his Converse here, he actually distinguish'd some Men from others, and particularly his *Disciples* and *Followers* from the rest of Mankind by his Favours and Graces. So that he recommended by *Example*, what he prescrib'd by *Precept*, in this his *New Commandment*.

And indeed, tho' it was impossible, that it should have been a Duty under the *State of Nature*; yet *this Love* is founded, as much, as *universal Benevolence*, in the *Reason of Things*. (1) For all our Love and Charity is in the *Reason of Things* owing to that *Being*, which is originally and absolutely good. And in this Sense *there is none good, save one, that is God*. So that our Love should *principally* be directed to him. But because he has been pleas'd to communicate his Goodness to the *Creatures*, we love them *secondarily* according to such Communications. And because *all Men* partake in some measure of the divine Perfections and Communications, in this is founded the Duty of *universal Love* and Be-

(1) Tho. Aquin. 22dæ. Quæst. XXV. Art. 1. Con.

nevolence, and our Affection is to be extended to *all Mankind*, in whom we may discern the *Image, Resemblance* and *Similitude* of the *Deity*. But the *Christian Man* is purg'd from his original Guilt by the Waters of Baptism, and the *Image of God* is restor'd and renew'd in him to a nearer *Similitude* by the (1) *Spirit of Grace*. That *Religion* therefore, which is exercis'd in the Communication and Communion of the *Spirit*, must needs be an Obligation to *stronger Love*, and more *ardent Affection*, than the Tye of *natural Religion* can lay us under. Since at the Entrance into it we engage our selves in higher Bonds to one another, and in Consequence of our Baptism become Partakers of such *Gifts and Graces*, which make us more like *God*, and really render us more amiable and lovely; for which we love another for *God's Sake*, the Author of them, and *Jesus Christ's Sake*, by and for whom he bestows them. And herein says the Apostle, (2) *We are pass'd from Death unto Life, because we love the Brethren.* (3) *For Love is of God, and every one, that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is Love.*

There is one Thing remaining, which I shall briefly observe to you to complete this Head: That as *univer-*

(1) Sed Imaginem Dei in cunctis considerandam, cui nihil non Honoris & Dilectionis debeamus. In Domesticis autem Fidei illam eandem diligentius observandam, quatenus per Christi Spiritum renovata est, & restaurata. Joh. Calvin. Lib. 3. Cap. 7. Sect. 6.

(2) St. *John's* 1st Epist. Chap. iii. ver. 14.

(3) Chap. iv. ver. 17.

sal Benevolence by no means excludes *private Friendship*; so neither doth *Brotherly Love* exclude *particular, religious Friendship*. For if an agreeable Manner, if a Likeness in Studies and Institution of Life, if Honesty, Uprightness and Integrity can unite the Minds of two *moral Men* so, that they can scarcely live without one another: A Communication in Spirituals, a more abundant Measure of *God's* Graces, higher Attainments in Knowledge, and superior Gifts, may also unite the Souls of *Religious Men* with Bonds of more noble and excellent Affection. Notwithstanding the Difference between the Age of *St. Paul* and *Timothy*, there seems to have subsisted between them such a superior kind of *Friendship*, which is founded in *Grace*, as well as *Virtue*; whereas the other is founded only in the latter. The Marks and Properties of *Friendship* are the particular Welfare of the Person lov'd, particular Benefits conferr'd and receiv'd, an ardent Desire of the Converse, and an Uneasiness under the Absence of him upon account of peculiar Graces: All which seem'd to combine together in *St. Paul* to distinguish *Timothy*, express'd in the most tender and engaging Manner at the Beginning of his second Epistle to him. *I thank God, whom I serve from my Forefathers with pure Conscience, that without ceasing I have Remembrance of thee in my Prayers, Night and Day. Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy Tears, that I may be filled with Joy. When I call to Remembrance the unfeigned Faith, which is in thee, which dwelt first in thy Grand-mother Lois, and thy Mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in*

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thee

thee also.---- Particular Prayers offer'd incessantly for his Well-Being, a warm Desire to see him, a sort of Ecstasy of Joy at the Thoughts of it, a Commemoration of his Kindness express'd to him, founded upon a Remembrance of his *Faith*, which he had in a more excellent Measure, are all Notes of that *Spiritual Friendship*, which I have before describ'd. And his Exception against *Mark*, who had been his *Fellow-Apostle*, which occasion'd such a sharp Contention between him and *Barnabas*, as to cause a Separation, is a sufficient Proof, that there may be *Christian Love*, where this kind of *Friendship* is not subsisting.

To what has been said, I shall subjoin some Reflections by way of Inference and Use.

1st, Since it has pleas'd *God* in his Providence evidently to distinguish Men by their *natural Frame* and *Disposition*, and to bless some above others in their *Complexions* and *Constitutions* by a peculiar Turn to *Benevolence* and *Goodness*, it seems, that when this Blessing is join'd with superior Talents, and a higher Condition in the World, the Exercise of *publick Virtue*, such as affects the *universal Good*, is the *Character* design'd by Providence for the Person so endow'd. This he ought to endeavour to maintain, since he has (if I may venture so to express it) a kind of *natural Grace* to prompt him to it from within, *Matter* from without to answer the internal Tendencies to *such Virtue*, and *Capacities* to regulate both in Point of Prudence and Discretion.

It doth not from hence follow, that this kind of *Virtue* should be confin'd only to Persons, so turn'd by
Nature ;

Nature; but yet those, who are so turn'd, and are regardless of the still Voice within them, seem to neglect a *tacit Admonition* from *Providence*, and rob the World of the *Recommendation* of such Virtue from the *Graces*, which usually arise to those Actions, which are form'd according to the Bent of our *Nature* and *Complexion*. For, as *rational Deductions* of *Duty* are *Laws*, which bind the Moral, and Political Man; these *innate, benevolent Affections* have, as it were, the Force of *Precepts*, inclining and disposing us in the Communication of our Good: Which, tho' they do not diminish the *Virtue* of the *Moral Agent*, when he pursues them, yet render him the more inexcusable, when he doth not.

And, if to neglect these internal Suggestions will aggravate our Sloth and Indolence, it is sure highly criminal in those, who not only frustrate the *Ends*, which they were design'd by the Author of Nature to promote, but suffer them to be perverted into *Occasions* of *Sin*. This has been so common a Miscarriage, that *Good-Nature* is come (by a kind of *Catachresis*) to stand in our Language for *Weakness* and *Folly*. And indeed it is so, when it becomes subservient to *Vice*, either in stopping the *Course* of *Justice* against incorrigible Offenders; in perverting the *Ends* of *Charity* by a general *Indiscrimination* of its Objects; in promoting the *Cause* of *Errour* by stifling our just Sentiments, lest we should oppose or pique the Persons, who abet it; or by deluding us into *base Compliances* either in *Principle* or *Practice*, whilst we permit our selves to be born down with the *common Cry*, or the *fashionable*

Opinion. Thus the *best, good Quality* is turn'd by *Corruption* into the *worst*; and these natural, internal Gifts are like the external Gifts and Blessings of Providence to those Persons, of whom the *wise Man* says, *The Prosperity of Fools shall destroy them.*

2dly, The Necessity of attending to the Distinction of *moral Benevolence* and *Christian, Brotherly Love*, may, from my second Particular, be establish'd against those, who shall either *inadvertently overlook* it, or would *knowingly confound* them. For it is of the greatest Consequence to *Religion* in general, and to the Oeconomy and Government of any *Church* in particular. Were these two Ideas to be left undistinguish'd, it would open a Way for all Manner of Anarchy, Disorder and Confusion. If by the Rule of *universal Benevolence* Men were entitled to the peculiar Favours of a *Society*, subsisting upon *particular, voluntary Engagements*; what Advantage then hath the *Christian*? And what Shadow of Reason remains for any *Tests* in *Religion*, any *Creed*, any *Articles*, by which the Government of the *Church* is maintain'd. It would indeed bring the Point to this Argument. Because this or that ingenious, or humane Person is a *Man*, therefore he should be treated as a *Christian*. No one can dispute the Absurdity of this. And should any one do so, the ill Consequences, attending such a Proceeding, would be a glaring Refutation.

But thus far *Benevolence* and *good Nature* will oblige us, that we should be cautious, lest we injure any by
unjust

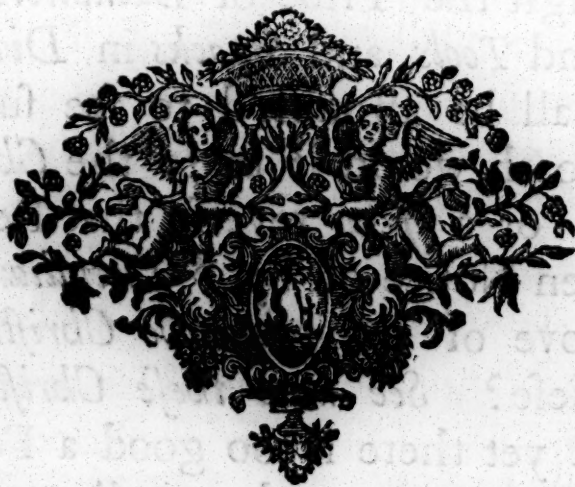
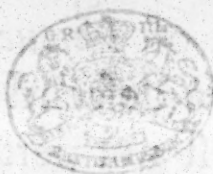
unjust Reflections, and wrong them in the tenderest Part, their *Religious Character*.

3dly and lastly, It may suffice only to observe further how inconsistently they act, who take upon themselves the Name of *Christ*, and are regardless to wear this *distinguishing Badge* of their Profession. If we look back into the World, and reflect what trifling Causes have sometimes rent and divided *Christian Kingdoms* and States, we should be apt to imagine, that the Authors of them thought *Christianity*, as the remarkable *Heathen* said of *Virtue*, to be but an empty Name. And so, if we descend lower, and carry our Thoughts (for we must not permit our Tongues to go thither) amongst the Tribe of *Backbiters* and *Railers*, and *Zealots*, and *Tools*, and *Quacks* in *Divinity* and *Politics*, we shall be astonish'd to see such *Christians*. What a Reproach would it be to the *Christian Name*, should a *Turk* or a *Jew* reverse that Remark of the *Heathens*, taken Notice of by * *Tertullian*, concerning the ardent Love of the *primitive Christians*, in such Terms, as these? *See how these Christians hate one another*. And yet there is too good a Foundation for such a Reflection. Let us but well consider what a *sweet* and *pleasant Thing* it is to wipe it of. If we do, it will be our Care and Concern to suppress every Cause of *publick Broils*, and even every little Insult to the

* *Tertullian*. *Apol.* Pag. 31. Edit. Par. Vide, inquit, ut invicem se diligant.

Persons of Men, and to quench and extinguish those Sparks, which may kindle into such Fires, as may inflame the *State*, and endanger the Peace of our *Jerusalem*.

F I N I S.



E R R A T A.

PAge 8, Line 15, for *Determination*, read *Determinations*.
Page 14, Note 2. for *omnes*, read *omnibus*.

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